

THE DEATH OF COMMON SENSE

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, John A. Smaldone of Maryville, Tennessee reads constantly and follows current events more closely than almost anyone.

He recently sent a letter to the editor of the Maryville-Alcoa Daily Times about the death of common sense.

I agree with this letter and would like to call it to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

[From the Daily Times, Feb. 27, 2009]

COMMON SENSE LONG DECEASED

(By John A. Smaldone)

DEAR EDITOR: Today I am sad to announce that we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense. Common sense has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: Knowing when to come in out of the rain; why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn't always fair; and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live, as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust; by his wife, Discretion; by his daughter, Responsibility; and by his son, Reason.

His four stepbrothers survive him;

I Know My Rights.

I Want It Now.

Someone Else Is To Blame.

I'm A Victim.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUNDS SEMIPOSTAL STAMP ACT: MARCH 12, 2009

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation today to financially assist some of the most endangered, charismatic and landmark wildlife species on this planet.

This measure is modeled after highly successful efforts to raise money for breast cancer research, to fund domestic violence prevention programs and to assist the families of rescue workers killed or disabled in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Under the terms of my proposal, the U.S. Postal Service would issue a semipostal stamp depicting highly imperiled African and Asian elephants, Rhinoceros, Tigers, Great Apes and Marine turtles. The stamp would be issued at a premium price so that the Postal Service could recapture their costs and would provide any additional revenues to the Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

While it is unclear how much money would be raised through the sale of semipostal wildlife stamps, we do know that since 1998, 802 million breast cancer stamps have been sold to the public which has raised a remarkable \$59.5 million for critical breast cancer research. It is also important to note that these new wildlife stamps will not replace or undermine the breast cancer stamps which by law will be available until at least December 31, 2011. I am also convinced that stamp enthusiasts will not only buy more breast cancer stamps but will purchase wildlife flagship species stamps.

For the past twenty years, the United States Congress has enacted Multinational Species Conservation Funds to assist African and Asian elephants, Rhinoceros, Tigers, Great Apes and Marine Turtles. Money appropriated to these funds are the only continuous source of revenue in the world for these species and approved conservation projects have stopped several of these animals from sliding toward extinction. Nevertheless, there is no denying that there are now less than 40,000 Asian elephants, 15,000 Rhinoceros and 5,000 tigers living in the wild and that six of the seven species of marine turtles are highly endangered. Without further assistance several of these species will disappear in our lifetime and it is, therefore, essential that new creative funding mechanisms be developed to save these imperiled species. The semipostal wildlife stamp has the potential to raise millions of dollars at no cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

Since 1988, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has funded more than 1,600 conservation projects to assist these species. What is not well known, however, is that the agency was unable to support an additional 1,300 meritorious projects which could well determine whether these species survive in the future.

Since coming to Congress, I have worked together with a number of conservation organizations to establish and extend funding for the Multinational Species Conservation Funds. I am pleased that 24 conservation organizations have endorsed this legislation including the African Wildlife Foundation, American

Veterinary Medical Association, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Born Free USA, Caribbean Conservation Corporation, Cheetah Conservation Fund, Conservation International, Defenders of Wildlife, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, Fauna and Flora International, Feld Entertainment, Humane Society of the United States, Humane Society International, International Elephant Foundation, International Fund for Animal Welfare, International Rhino Foundation, Jane Goodall Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Ocean Conservancy, Safari Club International, Wildlife Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society, The WILD Foundation, and the World Wildlife Fund. These diverse groups which represent tens of millions of people understand that additional funding for these landmark species is essential.

Finally, I would like to thank my Subcommittee Chairwoman MADELEINE BORDALLO, the former Chairmen of the Committee on Natural Resources, Congressmen DON YOUNG and GEORGE MILLER, Congressman RON KIND, Congresswoman MARY BONO MACK, Congressman PETER KING, Congressman JOHN TANNER and Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for joining with me as co-sponsors of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act.

ON INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT FOR ISSUING AN ARREST WARRANT FOR SUDANESE PRESIDENT OMAR HASSAN AHMAD AL-BASHIR

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce a resolution commending the International Criminal Court for issuing an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, for war crimes and crimes against humanity. This resolution reaffirms our nation's commitment to supporting a multifaceted approach to bringing about peace and stability in the Darfur region. After over six years of conflict in Darfur, six years of government-led genocide against its own people, six years of murder, rape, torture, and oppression, I applaud the international community for taking a major step forward in the name of justice, humanity, and the rule of law.

Madam Speaker, no leader who commits such horrific crimes should be allowed to remain free. President al-Bashir has directed the Sudanese government's efforts to use the very worst kinds of crimes to carry out an active program of oppression. While the roots of this conflict run deep, combining a complex mix of racial, tribal, religious, political, geographic, and environmental matters, surely there can be no excuse to engage in the kind of violence that President al-Bashir has inflicted on the people of Darfur. It is well past time to bring him to justice.

I laud the International Criminal Court for issuing a warrant for President al-Bashir's arrest. This was a long time coming. The ICC owes a great deal to the grassroots efforts of a wide range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights groups, individual

experts, and other activists for keeping up the pressure on the international community to act.

This warrant has not yet resulted in an arrest, nor even in a cessation of hostilities. In fact, President al-Bashir responded to the warrant by expelling over a dozen international aid agencies from the region, further threatening the lives of well over 1 million people who depend on these organizations for food, water, shelter, health care, and personal safety. Such is the measure of the Sudanese government and its leadership. But this warrant is a major step forward. When the international community begins to hold leaders responsible for their unconscionable crimes, we begin to prevent such abuses from occurring in the future.

Madam Speaker, I am under no illusion that this arrest warrant—even if it results in President al-Bashir's arrest and removal from power—will end the conflict in Darfur. This warrant is yet another step on the long road to ending this conflict and achieving some measure of stability in the war-torn region. But it will require a comprehensive approach combining positive political, economic, social, and even military efforts. The United States, for one, needs to build on the ICC's momentum by immediately committing to an intense diplomatic effort. I welcome Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's affirmative remarks on the ICC's warrant, and I further encourage President Obama to appoint a full-time, high-level envoy to the region. We can and we must build on the ICC's efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the atrocities in Darfur.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON KLEIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, on March 9, 2009, I was tending to a family commitment, for which the timing was not flexible.

Had I been able to vote, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 110; "yes" on rollcall No. 111; "yes" on rollcall No. 112.

HONORING WINTER HAVEN AREA TRANSIT'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, the Winter Haven Area Transit (WHAT) began as a three-year pilot program funded jointly by the City of Winter Haven and the Polk County Board of County Commissioners. It is now celebrating its 10th anniversary, marked by a special time capsule ceremony on Tuesday, March 17, 2009.

WHAT served 47,553 riders in its first year and served 589,747 last year. WHAT now provides transportation to Bartow, Eagle Lake, Auburndale, Lake Alfred, Lake Wales, Haines

City, Lakeland and Winter Haven. It has a fully functional state-of-the-art transit terminal serving thousands of riders each day.

The WHAT is operated under the Citrus Connection, which serves Lakeland—another city in my district. The Citrus Connection estimated that riders save \$1,300 they would otherwise spend on car expenses such as gas, title payments, maintenance, insurance, or parking fees. Given the pervasive ridership, the WHAT system puts money back in the pocket of taxpayers who would otherwise use it to unnecessarily sit in traffic.

The WHAT system moves people more efficiently to places of employment, shopping districts, medical appointments, and generally improves the quality of life of local residents.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to Winter Haven resident Larry Murphy, because this system would not have been put in place without his efforts. Mr. Murphy gathered 175 signatures on a petition and continually pushed his case before the city commission for the bus service. His efforts paid off and have been enjoyed by 2,687,618 riders over the past 10 years.

Mr. Murphy's vision was to help people get where they needed to go. His advocacy is what got the Winter Haven Area Transit buses. His legacy is what keeps them moving forward.

Happy 10th Anniversary to the Winter Haven Area Transit and a great thanks to Mr. Murphy.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FREEDOM FROM UNNECESSARY LITIGATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Freedom from Unnecessary Litigation Act. As its title suggests, this bill provides an effective means of ensuring that those harmed during medical treatment receive fair compensation while reducing the burden of costly malpractice litigation on the health care system. This bill achieves its goal by providing a tax credit for negative outcomes insurance purchased before medical treatment. The insurance will provide compensation for any negative outcomes of the medical treatment. Patients can receive this insurance without having to go through lengthy litigation and without having to give away a large portion of their award to a trial lawyer.

Relying on negative outcomes insurance instead of litigation will also reduce the costs imposed on physicians, other health care providers, and hospitals by malpractice litigation. The Freedom from Unnecessary Litigation Act also promotes effective solutions to the malpractice crisis by making malpractice awards obtained through binding, voluntary arbitration tax-free.

The malpractice crisis has contributed to the closing of a maternity ward in Philadelphia and a trauma center in Nevada. Several years ago, surgeons in West Virginia actually walked away from their jobs to protest increasing liability rates. These are a few of the examples of how access to quality health care is jeopardized by the epidemic of large, and medically questionable, malpractice awards, and the resulting increase in insurance rates.

As is typical of Washington, most of the proposed solutions to the malpractice problem involve unconstitutional usurpations of areas best left to the states. These solutions also ignore the root cause of the litigation crisis: the shift away from treating the doctor-patient relationship as a contractual one to viewing it as one governed by regulations imposed by insurance company functionaries, politicians, government bureaucrats, and trial lawyers.

There is no reason why questions of the assessment of liability and compensation cannot be determined by a private contractual agreement between physicians and patients. The Freedom from Unnecessary Litigation Act is designed to take a step toward resolving these problems through private contracts.

Using insurance, private contracts, and binding arbitration to resolve medical disputes benefits patients, who receive full compensation in a timelier manner than under the current system. It also benefits physicians and hospitals, which are relieved of the costs associated with litigation. Since it will not cost as much to provide full compensation to an injured patient, these bills should result in a reduction of malpractice premiums. The Freedom from Unnecessary Litigation Act benefits everybody except those trial lawyers who profit from the current system. I hope all my colleagues will help end the malpractice crises while ensuring those harmed by medical injuries receive just compensation by cosponsoring my Freedom from Unnecessary Litigation Act.

TRIBUTE TO JERRY PATTERSON

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Jerry Patterson, a native of Fort Dodge, Iowa, on being inducted into the Iowa High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Jerry, a 70-year-old resident of Fort Dodge has done everything in the game of baseball. He played high school baseball in Fort Dodge, has coached for many years, and has even owned a ball park. Fort Dodge's baseball field, Patterson Field, is named after Jerry.

Jerry was recently honored in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in front of a crowd of approximately 1,000 people from across the state. Patterson has been inducted to the Hall of Fame in honor of his passion, dedication, and contributions to the game of baseball and Fort Dodge.

Jerry, who has been successfully battling cancer for over 12 years, continues to serve as an inspiration to his community, and his contributions have made a lasting impact across the state. I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress join me in congratulating Jerry Patterson on his induction into the Hall of Fame. I consider it an honor to represent Jerry in Congress, and I wish him and his wife happiness and health in the future.